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New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

The Chairman: This morning I wish to start the proceedings of the First Committee by announcing, as most members of the Committee already know, that the 100th Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations. I congratulate him and am sure that all members will share these congratulations on this well-deserved distinction which has been awarded to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations as an Organization. It is a recognition of the activities of the United Nations and also, I would like to stress, of the future relevance of the United Nations in the world. I am very pleased to be able to make this announcement. In our future activities, including in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, we should all take heart from this recognition.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations.

This is indeed a proud day for the United Nations, a day on which the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Organization as a whole have been awarded the centenary Nobel Peace Prize in signal recognition of their contribution to a better-organized and more peaceful world. On behalf of the Caribbean Community, let me join you, Mr. Chairman, in congratulating the Secretary-General and the men and women of the Organization who, in all parts of the world, serve the cause of peace.

This award comes at a time when the horrendous acts of terrorism committed on 11 September have left us all shaken and infinitely more aware of our vulnerability, of the fragility of international security and of the need for collective action in the face of unspeakable crimes orchestrated with tools of everyday civilian life. We dare not contemplate the implications for the security of States of the possibility of weapons of mass destruction reaching the hands of unprincipled sponsors of international terrorism who show no respect for human life or for the rule of law. It is our hope that in the wake of these tragic events, and in the wake of the signal award to this Organization, the work of the Committee will be imbued with renewed urgency.

We have witnessed during the past year an ebb in the energy and optimism that infused the Committee's consideration of measures to strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. At that time we celebrated the small but significant achievements of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which secured the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States for the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals; and we echoed the Millennium Declaration, which called for concerted action towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We have, however, not seen those rallying

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words transformed into demonstrable action: we still stand short of the achievement of universality in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament; we still anticipate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the Conference on Disarmament has yet again failed to reach agreement to begin negotiation on a fissile material cut-off treaty; and we still pursue security assurances and confidence-building measures to strengthen the regime for the maintenance of international peace and security.

This stalled multilateral disarmament agenda presents a disturbing framework within which we must seek to advance an already tenuous international peace and security agenda. It offers little comfort, particularly to small States such as our own, for the void created by the absence of a strong multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime is inevitably filled by suspicion and distrust, negating confidence-building measures and heightening the intimidation of lawlessness from State and non-State actors. This threat is true in respect not only of nuclear weapons but also of biological and chemical weapons. We share the concerns expressed at the inability of the Ad Hoc Group on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction to advance its work on the elaboration of a draft protocol on verification arrangements. It is our hope that the upcoming Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention will contribute towards strengthening this regime, thus reducing the threat posed by such weapons. We also look forward to participating actively in the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Our non-proliferation and disarmament agenda will not advance meaningfully until the inertia in the Conference on Disarmament is overcome. It is disconcerting to receive, year after year, reports of the failure of that important body to agree on a programme of work, precluding substantive consideration of the nuclear disarmament agenda. It is also disappointing that in the debate in this Committee there is rarely mention of the value of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Should we then conclude that political will is exhausted? Recent events do not afford us that option. We should instead make good this opportunity to renew our collective commitment to both nuclear and conventional non-proliferation and disarmament. We welcome the contribution of the Disarmament Commission to this effort through its current deliberation on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. We consider that that body can and should play a more integral, supportive role as a deliberative forum within the disarmament infrastructure of the Organization.

CARICOM States also recognize the important contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones towards strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and in promoting regional security and stability. We maintain that their success is to be found in their establishment on the basis of agreements freely reached among the States of the region concerned. We remain committed to the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), to which we are a party, and encourage the development of mechanisms aimed at promoting cooperation among the zones with a view to ultimately strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

This year's endeavours have not, however, been without success. Of particular importance to CARICOM States was the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That meeting was very welcome as a demonstration of the international community's acknowledgement of the need to urgently address the proliferation and illegal use of these weapons. For vulnerable States such as ours, exposed to this illicit trade often linked to drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, this was a vital undertaking. The increasing threat to the security and stability of our societies and the challenge to our economic and social development are too serious to ignore. CARICOM States take this opportunity once again to express their appreciation to Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodríguez, President of the Conference, and to Ambassador Carlos dos Santos, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, for their skilful management of a sensitive project.

We now look forward to early implementation of measures articulated in the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels, so as to strengthen the global collective effort to stem the flow of these illegal weapons and to rid our societies of their

deadly influence. We share the view, however, that the outcome of the Conference represents a first important step on the long journey towards the achievement of truly effective control of this illicit trade. That objective, we believe, will not be attained until we implement measures to regulate the legal trade in small arms and light weapons, including improved monitoring of firearms dealers and secondary markets, the application of more rigorous standards for arms brokers, and strict import and export authorization regimes. We believe that there is a central role for the Secretariat to play in coordinating all United Nations activities concerning small arms, and in this context we welcome the important role that the Department for Disarmament Affairs, through its coordinating mechanism for action on small arms, continues to play in ensuring regular consultation and coordination among all entities within the United Nations system for which the matter of small arms is of integral concern.

CARICOM recommends that these existing mechanisms be strengthened to enhance in-house capacity to undertake more research and analysis on the nature and scope of the problem and to provide practical assistance to affected States. There is still a paucity of data on the small-arms phenomenon. We believe that institutions like the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research should be strengthened with a view to widening the database of information. We also note that the United Nations continues to experience difficulty in recruiting disarmament experts and trainers for service within peacekeeping operations in the field. This need could be addressed in part by encouraging Governments to establish databases of expertise on disarmament to enhance the United Nations capacity when the need arises.

These initiatives will, of course, demand additional resources, both human and financial. CARICOM members were therefore very disappointed that the outcome of the 2001 Conference did not see specific commitment to the investment of new and additional resources. Without the injection of fresh resources our efforts will be significantly compromised. We encourage better coordination among existing small arms funds to ensure maximization of the impact of these resources. We also consider that it would be useful to explore the possibility of working more closely with the United Nations Development Programme to identify areas in which its Trust Fund for Support to Prevention and Reduction of the Proliferation of Small Arms, which involves a weapons-for-development approach, can be of assistance in the disarmament component of peacekeeping operations.

CARICOM States continue to participate actively in regional initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of our States to more effectively control the illegal arms trade and narco-trafficking. Where our subregion is concerned we cannot contemplate solutions to the illicit arms trade without addressing at the same time measures to control the illicit drug trade. Many of these activities are implemented under the sponsorship of the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, often in coordination with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS). We again use this opportunity to convey our appreciation of the support we receive from these organizations.

CARICOM States also note with satisfaction the steady progress achieved in the decreased production of anti-personnel landmines, the destruction of stockpiles, the demining of land and the reduction of casualties from landmine blasts. We consider this an encouraging indication of the commitment of member States to fully implement this Convention, made all the more worthy for its overwhelming humanitarian benefits. We continue to call for more assistance for those States addressing the difficult task of demining and for support for victims of landmine explosions.

CARICOM States will continue to raise in the debates in this Committee their apprehension regarding the safety and environmental risks to which coastal States are exposed by the maritime transportation of nuclear waste and other radioactive material. We place great store on the conclusions and recommendations of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last year regarding the strengthening of measures and international regulations to protect States from such risks. The trans-shipment of irradiated material through the Caribbean Sea is of particular concern, and we continue to call for the cessation of this practice. This position notwithstanding, we again underscore the need for the international community to consider the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory framework promoting State responsibility in

such areas as disclosure, liability and compensation in relation to accidents.

Once again we have been offered the opportunity to refocus the disarmament agenda. If we are to move forward we must do so together. That means that we must somehow find the political will to eschew polarization in the disarmament debate and find common ground on which to renew our dialogue. In the search to achieve disarmament and international peace and security, the words of the eminent Caribbean scholar, Sir Shridath Ramphal, ring true:

> "cooperation is no longer merely an option; it is a precondition of life in the global neighbourhood. It is not just a strategic choice; it is a compulsion of civilized existence."

In conclusion, let me convey the congratulations of the member States of CARICOM to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of your Bureau on your election to guide the work of this important Committee. I assure you of the full cooperation of our delegation as you discharge your onerous responsibilities. We also wish to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, and to the staff of the Department for their dedication, demonstrated in the consistently high quality of their work.

Mr. Da Silva (Angola): The Angolan delegation wishes at the outset to extend sincere congratulations to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau upon your election. We are confident, Sir, that with your rich experience and diplomatic skills our deliberations will come to a successful conclusion. You are assured of the support and cooperation of my delegation. My delegation would also like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

At these very difficult times that still characterize the city of New York, as a consequence of the large-scale devastation and loss of human life caused by the 11 September terrorist attack, we consider it important to highlight the fact that terrorists are the common enemies of all societies and do not come from any particular religion, culture or nationality. Angola, like few others, understands the need to adopt measures to prevent and punish acts of terrorism. My country associates itself with Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) and General Assembly resolution 56/1, which express the commitment of the international community to use all the elements at its disposal to eliminate the threat to peace and security that terrorism represents.

Over the past decade in Angola thousands of people have been killed in almost daily terrorist attacks perpetrated by UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi. The continuous attacks by UNITA against the civilian population correspond to the elements that qualify the crime of terrorism. As such, the fight against this scourge must be global and without any type of discrimination. The tragic impact of those UNITA acts on peace, security, stability and development in Angola raises the understanding and solidarity of the international community as well as the recognition that they also constitute a threat to peace and international security. For that reason the Security Council has many times appropriately condemned UNITA's actions by imposing sanctions against it. I appeal to all States to comply strictly with the sanctions imposed on UNITA and to cooperate with the monitoring mechanism for sanctions against UNITA as being within the scope of measures to eliminate international terrorism.

We are fully aware of the close and complex links between terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal exportation of natural resources, and the illegal trafficking and easy availability of small arms and light weapons. At the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the outcome of the consensus was the adoption of a Programme of Action as an important step towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade. It included guidelines for practical action at the national, regional and international levels. Despite our efforts and determination, small arms and light weapons continue to end up in the hands of terrorist groups, rebels and other unlawful elements. The proliferation, misuse and accumulation of those weapons have devastating effects. It is a reality that, as a practical problem of security, small arms and light weapons have a far more direct impact on the everyday lives of people, and cause far more death, injury and economic loss, than weapons of mass destruction. The challenge that faces us is to strengthen cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international levels that can lead us to the full implementation of the measures contained in the Programme of Action.

We share the view that we should continue our discussion at the national, regional and global levels on

the need to establish and maintain controls over private ownership of small arms, and the need to prevent sales of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. We cannot possibly reap any success in fighting terrorism if we do not take comprehensive steps to prevent all kinds of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, from falling into the hands of terrorist groups.

The Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction held in Nicaragua from 18 to 21 September, was a success. It contributed to further progress with respect to the universality and implementation of the Convention. The entry into force of the Ottawa Convention represents a significant step forward and underlines the international community's commitment to eliminate the scourge of landmines.

Angola, as a State party to this instrument, is strongly committed to its effective implementation. This is an essential part of the framework aimed at addressing this problem. Angola is also committed to strengthening this framework where it is possible to do so. In our view a transfer ban on anti-personnel landmines would complement and reinforce existing instruments.

Angola has in place a national programme of action against mines, whose objectives are to create an environment in which people can live and work safely and to meet the concerns and priorities of the victims. To reduce the number of victims, the Angolan Government decided to include in the school curriculum programme the subject of mine awareness activities. Nevertheless, we are faced with the problem that in many areas already identified as mine areas, where we have placed signs to avoid more victims, the UNITA rebels, led by Jonas Savimbi, are removing those signs, thus killing more people, mostly children and women, in the same brutal fashion as any act of terrorism. Once again, there is a need for coordinated action by the international community to achieve the complete elimination of anti-personnel landmines.

The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is a matter of universal concern. Angola, as a developing country, is firmly committed to a non-proliferation regime. We continue to pursue with vigour our strong advocacy of general and complete disarmament. In regard to nuclear tests, we remain committed to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which will make a vital contribution to advancing nuclear disarmament by constraining the qualitative improvement in nuclear weapons. Angola supports the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which provides the international community with a clear vision of the steps to be taken in the near future. One of the partial measures identified within the framework of the NPT to ensure constructive and steady progress towards nuclear disarmament remains the entry into force of the CTBT, the parties to which will soon meet here in New York to consider ways to obtain the necessary number of ratifications to accelerate its entry into force.

Angola recognizes the importance of the early entry into force and full implementation of START II and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible, while preserving and retaining the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) as the cornerstone of strategic stability and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons.

Another most important issue is the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. The Conference on Disarmament should start deliberations on this problem at the earliest. The priority should be to establish the subsidiary bodies that will make it possible to fully focus on examining this issue in all its aspects.

In conclusion, I should like to stress that, since the process of disarmament affects the vital security interests of all States, we must all be actively concerned with, and contribute to, the disarmament and arms limitation measures which play an essential role in maintaining and strengthening international security. Therefore, the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament, in accordance with its Charter, must be reinforced.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I join other speakers in expressing my delegation's, and my own personal, warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee, as well as to the members of the Bureau on their election. We have full confidence that, given your vast experience and great expertise on disarmament issues, you will be able to guide our deliberations to a fruitful conclusion. I assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

Let me also extend my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar, a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I should also like to take this opportunity to join you, Mr. Chairman, in warmly congratulating the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the United Nations on being selected to receive this year's Nobel Peace Prize. This is a fitting tribute to the importance and continued relevance of the United Nations and to the sagacious leadership provided by the Secretary-General, notably in the promotion and maintenance of global peace. The award should inspire us all to redouble our efforts to attain the goals we set ourselves as Members of this Organization, including in the area of disarmament.

My delegation associates itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Myanmar, who spoke on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), but would like to make additional remarks on issues of particular interest to Malaysia.

We are all too aware that, despite the so-called peace dividends resulting from the end of the cold war, achievements in the disarmament area have fallen far short of our expectations. Indeed, in the nuclear disarmament area, progress, if any, has been negligible. In fact, instead of progress towards greater disarmament efforts there have been setbacks, with an additional number of nuclear-weapon States, the weakening of existing nuclear disarmament treaties and a virtually complete standstill in negotiations on nuclear disarmament on both the bilateral and multilateral tracks. Therefore the challenge facing the international community as it tries to realize a nuclear-weapon-free world remains formidable, requiring our total and unqualified commitment to the goals we set ourselves. Our final goal must remain the elimination of all these weapons, not at some vague, never-to-be-defined, remote time in the future, which some people interpret as "never", but within a time-frame that, while distant, is nevertheless possible, realistic and attainable. Towards this end, nuclear disarmament should not be relegated to the back burner, as some would prefer, but must remain a high-priority issue on the global agenda.

The mindless, horrific terrorist attacks on the United States, which we have all condemned in the strongest terms, were a shocking and cruel wake-up call for all of us to the danger of international terrorism, to which all countries are vulnerable and which poses the most complex security challenge to our global security today. The incidents reminded us of the fragility of international peace and security and the need for the international community to close ranks in our common effort to ensure that peace and security prevail in the new millennium. In a world that will now have to confront a new, faceless but deadly foe, these events should remind us of the ever-present danger of nuclear terrorism and other weapons of mass destruction. This was recognized by the Secretary-General himself, who aptly told the General Assembly:

> "While the world was unable to prevent the 11 September attacks, there is much we can do to help prevent future terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction". (*A/56/PV.12*)

Let the words of the Secretary-General spur us towards redoubling our efforts to eliminate these weapons.

The States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed at the 2000 Review Conference that there should be no halfway measures in the quest for nuclear disarmament. They concluded that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In addition, the nuclear-weapon States took a positive and commendable step in this direction by making an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament.

It is, however, necessary to remind ourselves that the nuclear disarmament objectives agreed upon in 1995, though modest, have not been attained; hence the need for the concrete implementation of the objectives and principles of the Final Document of 2000 without delay. While it is still too early to determine the fate of the 13 steps to nuclear disarmament agreed at the Review Conference, my delegation hopes that serious efforts will be made to give substance to these undertakings as we approach next year's first Preparatory Committee meeting for the Treaty's 2005 Review Conference. We look forward, therefore, to the realization of the commitment made by the United States and the Russian Federation to work actively to bring about a considerable reduction in their nuclear arsenals. We hope that these will not remain platitudes, mere statements of intent that will be repeated at every review conference of the NPT.

States Parties to the NPT must address the issue of the universality of the Treaty in a more serious fashion. If the universality of the Treaty is to remain a serious and attainable objective, which it should be, every effort must be made to bring those outside the NPT to accede to it, since clearly having them inside the Treaty would be more desirable than leaving them outside. I believe the objective of the universality of the Treaty will be better served by adopting a common-sense, practical and creative approach. In the global campaign for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons, the universality of this Treaty, as well as of other relevant treaties and conventions, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), is an extremely important objective to be attained.

We continue to be dismayed, as we have been for the past several years, at the lack of progress at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The impasse in the Conference is a matter of serious concern to the international community. We strongly urge the three Special Coordinators designated by the Conference to make every effort to break the impasse and move the negotiations forward. Together with the expansion of its membership and the improvement in the efficiency of its functioning, the Conference should make every effort and move to attain its objectives as soon as possible.

National missile defence (NMD) has now become the most hotly debated issue on the world security agenda. The continuing impasse at the Conference on Disarmament has been further complicated by developments in the area of anti-ballistic defence systems, specifically the efforts to develop and deploy the so-called NMD. My delegation shares the Secretary-General's concern over plans to deploy national missile defences, which will inevitably threaten not only current bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements but also ongoing and future disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. A missile defence system will pose serious problems for future progress in arms control, especially deep nuclear reductions.

My delegation believes that the security costs of deployment will far outweigh the security benefits. The deployment of such a system will have a highly destabilizing effect on international security and will most likely lead to a new arms race. That would be a major setback to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We would strongly urge against the development and deployment of the missile defence system, because of its serious ramifications for international security. My delegation would therefore call for a strengthening of the existing Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty while addressing, in more serious fashion, the issue of the threat of global missile proliferation. My delegation is convinced that abrogation of the ABM Treaty would have grave consequences for the future of international security.

My delegation is encouraged by the increase in the number of ratifications of the CTBT during the past year. It remains our hope that the remaining number of the 44 countries stipulated in article XIV will accede to and ratify the Treaty so as to effect its entry into force as soon as possible. Malaysia fully recognizes the importance of universal adherence to the CTBT, and is in the process of ratifying it. However, we believe it is important for the remaining article XIV countries to lead the way.

The historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, given in July 1996, was a major and positive development and a significant contribution by the World Court in the campaign for nuclear disarmament. Regrettably, that Opinion continues to be ignored by the nuclear-weapon States. Malaysia and other like-minded countries will continue efforts for follow-up actions to the Advisory Opinion of the Court at this and future sessions of the General Assembly. We hope that, as in previous years, the draft resolution to be put forward in this Committee will continue to enjoy wide support from Member States of the Organization.

As advances in biotechnology are increasing the potential threat posed by biological weapons, there is an urgent need to speed up the negotiations on a verification regime for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Today the BWC is more significant than ever and the spirit that inspired it is very much alive. However, many years of efforts to conclude a protocol to strengthen this key Treaty have ended abruptly due to the decision of a major negotiating partner which opposes the draft composite text of the protocol that was presented at the twenty-fourth session of the Ad Hoc Group. We also regret that the Group could not even adopt a final report on its work. However, we look forward to the Treaty's next five-year Review Conference, scheduled to convene in Geneva next month, in the hope that it will provide another opportunity to revisit this issue.

It is imperative that those States that have not ratified or acceded to this Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) should do so at the earliest opportunity so that the Conventions' effectiveness will be further enhanced through their universality. We believe this goal is attainable, as these Conventions have made an important contribution towards the world community's collective efforts to eliminate the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

Conventional weapons have become even more sophisticated, and hence more lethal. Thanks to the aggressive marketing efforts of the arms vendors of, mostly, the industrialized countries, these weapons are now in the arsenals of impoverished countries which can ill afford them. In an unprecedented move, the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects that took place in July, adopted a Programme of Action at the end of the Conference. This Conference marked a significant step towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. What remains is for States to fulfil their respective obligations under the Programme of Action. Malaysia believes that the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons must be viewed from a holistic perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development. In the context of conflict situations, the problem should be seen comprehensively in the framework of disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants.

My delegation is proud to announce that Malaysia became the first mine-free country in Asia in January this year, as we have completed our stockpile destruction of anti-personnel landmines and, therefore, accordingly fulfilled our obligations under article 4 of the Ottawa Convention. We remain committed to the attainment of a truly universal ban of anti-personnel landmines. The destruction of almost 95,000 anti-personnel landmines began in mid-January this year and took place at three different locations in Malaysia, using one of the safest and effective methods available. Malaysia is firm in its conviction that humanitarian sufferings caused by anti-personnel landmines far outweigh their military utility. It remains our hope and expectation that there will be a stronger political push for universal acceptance of this Treaty. In this regard, we welcome the positive outcome of the Conference of States Parties held in Managua recently, which will result in the more efficacious implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

Malaysia takes pride in the role it played in shaping the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone along with our partners in ASEAN. The establishment of these zones is an important and integral part of the nuclear disarmament process. We continue to believe that the establishment of these zones in various parts of the world will help to create conditions conducive to peace and stability and to promote regional confidence building. My delegation attaches great importance to the promotion of such zones and strongly supports their establishment in other parts of the world, particularly in West Asia or the Middle East, as called for in the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference and reconfirmed at the 2000 Review Conference.

Malaysia believes in the importance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and strongly supports it. We fully recognize the need for increased transparency in armaments and that the United Nations has an important role in promoting it.

Efforts in respect of conventional weapons, important as they are, should not detract from nuclear disarmament efforts, which should always remain a top priority issue on the international agenda until these horrendous weapons have been completely eliminated from the face of the earth. Malaysia therefore commends the Secretary-General for his call for the convening of an international conference to consider all aspects of the nuclear-weapons issue, and would strongly encourage him to follow up on his laudable proposal. The convening of such a conference will provide an opportunity for the international community to rededicate and recommit itself to the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, leading towards the realization of a world entirely free of nuclear weapons.

Given the formidable challenges ahead of us, we should never relent in the concerted campaign for nuclear disarmament. We should not succumb to creeping complacency or arguments that everything is all right on the disarmament front. In this regard, we acknowledge and highly appreciate the positive role of non-governmental organizations in sustaining global interest in nuclear disarmament issues. Let me commend them for their supportive but important role, which has inspired us to move the disarmament process forward by

sharing their knowledge and expertise with us. Malaysia considers them to be indispensable partners in a common cause. They are truly the conscience of humanity, acting as beacons and showing us the way to a world eventually free of all weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to pay the highest tribute to the Department of Disarmament Affairs, under the able and dynamic leadership of my friend, Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, who I am pleased to see is on the podium, for its work in promoting the disarmament agenda of the United Nations.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Like other speakers who have spoken before me, I wish warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair of the First Committee and for the manner in which you are guiding our debate. Your entire Bureau can rely upon the full support and cooperation of my delegation, which is taking up our work in the spirit of openness and conciliation.

I also wish to take this opportunity to condemn, once more, the heinous recent attacks which struck our host city, New York, and America as a whole, and to convey once again to the American people and Government our deep sympathy. The historic debate which took place right here last week was an opportunity for the entire international community firmly to commit itself to strengthen cooperation in fighting the serious scourge of international terrorism. These criminal acts highlight the urgent need for profound thought on the nature of the dangers threatening the world today. Our perception of the threat would thus be altered and the concept of security resulting from it would lay down guidelines for defining and putting into effect a new form of international cooperation.

The climate of tension that has prevailed since the resurgence of the terrorist risk gives special poignancy to the present nature of the debates in the Committee, some of which have been going on for decades. The time seems ripe for an increase in our collective awareness in order to speed up significant progress in the areas under discussion, namely peace and security and general and complete disarmament. It is on these items that my delegation now wishes to make a few observations.

First, with regard to international peace and security, in addition to the need for increased international cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations, we need to emphasize more than ever global and coherent strategies for conflict prevention. In this context we can never overstate the need to strengthen the role and increase the ways and means of the United Nations to prevent conflicts. Recommendations contained in the report presented by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and the Security Council last June on the prevention of armed conflict, should be appropriately followed up. This is the moment for me to welcome the honour which has just been conferred on the United Nations and the Secretary-General by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize, which was just announced this morning. Indubitably this is a tribute and encouragement that cannot go unnoticed among Member States and I welcome it.

Special emphasis needs to be given to a well-defined strategy for the maintenance and consolidation of peace. Here, as is often the case, the problem arises with regard to the measures to be applied to formulate both a policy and decisive action. We need to ensure that continuous attention is given to the report of the Working Group on the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations approved by the Millennium Summit.

In this respect I wish to recall, especially as regards Africa, the commitment contained in the Millennium Declaration

> "To encourage and sustain regional and subregional mechanisms for preventing conflict and promoting political stability, and to ensure a reliable flow of resources for peacekeeping operations on the continent". (*A/RES/55/2, para. 28*)

Moreover, with regard to disarmament, the first step would be to implement the commitment made in the Millennium Declaration, according to which the leaders of the world appeal for work towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and a reduction in the risk of small arms and landmines. There is thus urgency to speed up the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Moreover, the need to create a climate of trust between nations and to avoid a return to a nuclear arms race requires us to avoid any unilateral measures that could weaken and undermine the existing balance in the area of nuclear defence. The world today needs more than ever confidence-building measures and real will to act in concert. We need to reactivate the Conference on Disarmament so that it can finally adopt

its programme of work and firmly take up serious negotiations on the issues before it in order to reach legally binding, irrevocable and verifiable agreements on disarmament.

We welcome the holding of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001 and which led to the adoption of a Programme of Action. To prevent, combat and eliminate the trade in these weapons such an objective would be strengthened if, on the one hand, States began to apply the principles recommended in the Programme and, on the other hand, a consensus could be reached on the outstanding issues. A rapid resumption of negotiations on these litigious items would certainly be an extremely significant initiative.

My country has always accorded special importance to the debate in the Committee on issues vital to mankind. But today this interest is of special importance because of the domestic Congolese context and the Central African subregional environment. Indeed, emerging from a long period of civil war, which has caused countless loss of human life and huge material destruction, every national effort is centred on measures to consolidate peace, both inside and outside the country. In this context, in March and April 2001 a national convention took place designed to create a political consensus on the conditions to strengthen peace, democracy, and measures to reconstruct the national economy. At the same time we are pursuing, with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a broad project for disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants. In the context of that project, more than 20,000 ex-militia have been demobilized, 10,292 firearms have been collected, of which 6,500 have already been destroyed, and roughly 5,600 ex-militia are being assisted in reintegration through 1,496 micro-projects.

We have taken steps with the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and those groups interested in specific disarmament measures, in order to seek financing for the continuation of this vital project for the consolidation of peace in the Congo. This involves the establishment of a sustainable peace by integrating the ex-combatants in productive work and giving them new cause for hope, an alternative to resorting to violence. At the same time, in the context of the promotion of confidence-building measures at the subregional level, the Congo is actively participating in the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. This is a particularly sensitive area in view of the convulsions in the Central African subregion and the Great Lakes over the last few years.

We can easily understand why one of the recent Committee activities was to organize in Bujumbura from 14 to 16 August 2000 a subregional conference on the question of refugees and displaced persons within their own countries in the Central African subregion. The Advisory Committee has already adopted various important initiatives, namely the creation of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and is establishing a Central African multinational force. There already exists a committee of those responsible for the police in Central African countries, who are in contact with each other and consult regularly on questions of common interest. At each of the ministerial conferences the committee examines the geopolitical situation in terms of security for member States. It also discusses cooperation between the States of the subregion in the various areas of security.

At the bilateral level my country holds talks with all of its neighbours on the questions of peace and good-neighbourly relations. Agreements have been reached with Gabon, the Central African Republic, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With the latter we have just established an ongoing structure for cooperation in the field of security, that is, the organization of joint military patrols to monitor our joint border and to provide security for the people along the Congo and Oubangui rivers, which until recently were still the theatres of violent fighting and the massive displacement of peoples.

My country is committed to the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa and throughout the world through a broad variety of measures. The most recent among them are the accession of Congo to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and a modest symbolic contribution to the United Nations Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures. That shows all the interest and hope that we place in the success of the work of the Committee to which an untimely event is giving exceptional importance.

Mrs. Raholinirina (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is happy to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to guide our work. I am persuaded that the Committee will fully benefit from your qualities, both professional and personal, and that under your guidance our deliberations will come to a successful conclusion. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We also wish to pay tribute to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under the leadership of Mr. Dhanapala, for its tireless efforts to promote the cause of disarmament.

Our work takes place in a climate full of uncertainty after the terrible tragedy of 11 September 2001, which will forever mark the history of mankind. In these trying times we wish to express our sincere condolences and deep sympathy to the people and the Government of the United States. I also take this opportunity to reiterate the strongest possible condemnation by the Republic of Madagascar of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. By their very nature, terrorist acts are the clearest expression of the negation of the primacy of law and of the violation of fundamental human rights. Through its mandate the First Committee has a crucial role to play in efforts to be made to fight the scourge of terrorism which threatens international peace and security.

The abominable acts committed on 11 September showed that terrorists are ruthless in the means they use and stop at nothing. The annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 2000 is revealing in this regard. According to that document, terrorist and other groups could try to acquire nuclear material through theft. It is even more disquieting to learn from the report that the fight against the illegal trade in nuclear and radioactive weapons has increased due to the proliferation of such acts. The Secretary-General stressed this when on 1 October he told the General Assembly:

> "The greatest danger arises from a non-State group, or even a private individual, acquiring and using a nuclear, biological or chemical weapon". (*A/56/PV.12*)

In the face of this grave threat, Madagascar cannot but support the Secretary-General's appeal for States to redouble their efforts to ensure the universality, verification and full implementation of key treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction. We also endorse his proposal for the tightening of national legislation over exports of goods and technologies needed to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. At any rate, in accordance with the Millennium Declaration, our ultimate objective must be a world free from weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

History has shown that nuclear weapons are the most fearsome weapons ever invented by human beings. The risk of their use by terrorists only aggravates the threat posed by nuclear weapons to the survival of mankind. There is not a shadow of a doubt that for as long as there are nuclear weapons on our planet a world free from fear will be only a dream. In the area of nuclear disarmament, we regret the absence of tangible progress in making a reality of the unequivocal commitment of the nuclear Powers made at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Thus the hope raised by the positive results of that Conference has been replaced by concern.

The inability of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on its agenda and begin negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty does not inspire us with optimism either. To this we must add the lack of sufficient progress in the universal ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Other reasons for concern are the inability of the Disarmament Commission to agree on the holding of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and the looming arms race in outer space.

The many challenges that we face require that we renew our commitment to the cause of disarmament as a whole. The positive results achieved so far should encourage us to persevere and to redouble our efforts in this long and difficult enterprise. In this context, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, Asia and Latin America constitute a valuable step forward in the nuclear disarmament process. The creation of these zones, on the basis of agreements between the States of the region concerned should be encouraged, since it contributes to the strengthening of regional security and of mutual confidence among these States. Convinced that transparency favours the establishment of a climate of confidence, which is essential for lasting peace, Madagascar welcomes the increase in the number of States participating in the United Nations

Register of Conventional Arms. We are in favour of any initiative to increase participation in the Register.

Guided by its deep attachment to peace, in this year 2001, which marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, Madagascar would like to see a more active contribution by all the parties concerned in the search for ways and means to realize the fundamental objectives of that Declaration.

The century that has just ended was marked by bloody conflicts, most of them fed by the proliferation of light weapons. The holding in July this year of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was a historic occasion to agree on the development of a global strategy to fight this scourge. Despite its deficiencies in certain areas which are deemed essential by most delegations, including my own, the Programme of Action adopted by that Conference must be implemented as soon as possible in order to curb the devastating effects of light weapons. As the continent most affected by the phenomenon of the illegal trade in light weapons, Africa looks forward to meaningful signs of the speedy implementation of the Programme of Action, especially in the area of technical and financial assistance. The efforts of the African States in the fields of conflict prevention, conflict settlement and post-conflict peace-building deserve to be supported by the international community through the strengthening of the capacity of Africa for peace operations by equipping it with the necessary training and adequate means.

Along the same lines, Madagascar hopes that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa will become fully operational so that it can make an effective contribution to the promotion of peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region.

Like other developing regions, Africa has also known the agony caused by anti-personnel landmines, which cause unspeakable suffering to civilian populations, just as light weapons do. My delegation therefore welcomes the holding in Managua, from 18 to 21 September 2001, of the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Madagascar hopes that this Convention will gain universal adherence, in order to put an end to the suffering of civilian populations, which are an easy target for this category of arms in times of war and in times of peace. Madagascar likewise deems it timely to establish in Africa a zone free of anti-personnel landmines.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization notes the constant increase in global military expenditures recorded in certain industrialized countries and in various developing countries. This sombre assessment leads us to state that lasting security lies not in the accumulation of weapons, but in relations based on confidence and full respect for the noble objectives enshrined in the Charter. The close link between peace and development, which is an undeniable reality, makes more relevant than ever the need to allocate the colossal sums spent on the arms race to development efforts.

The current situation requires a fresh look at our approaches and convictions regarding security. Our choice is clear: the narrow path of selfish national interest or the broader path of international peace and prosperity.

My delegation hopes that at this very special session our choice will be guided by the voice of wisdom throughout our deliberations, in order to make this Committee an instrument capable of producing the drive required for the peace dynamic on which our common future depends.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): May I at the outset felicitate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election. We are confident that your competence and in-depth knowledge of the issues that come within the purview of the First Committee will be invaluable in guiding a productive session. Let me also thank your predecessor, my friend Ambassador Mya Than, for his valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee as the Chairman at the last session.

My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala and the officials of his Department, both here in New York and in Geneva, for their laudable work. It is all the more commendable since the Department for Disarmament Affairs is the smallest department of the United Nations Secretariat but is responsible for one of the main priority areas of the Organization.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the United Nations Secretariat on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which both Mr. Annan and the United Nations richly deserve.

This year the First Committee is meeting for its annual assessment of international security and disarmament at a very crucial juncture. Our host country, in particular this city in which we are located, and the international community as a whole have witnessed a terrible human tragedy. We unequivocally condemn such terrorist attacks. Having experienced similar barbaric acts of terrorism, we in Sri Lanka very well understand and share the anguish and pain of those who have suffered from such acts of indiscriminate violence perpetrated on innocent civilians. Sri Lanka stands shoulder to shoulder with the United States and with the rest of the world to eradicate the menace of terrorism.

While learning lessons from such tragedies, we need to reflect deeply on the necessary measures, some relating to the work of the Committee, to bring a sense of realism and purpose to our endeavours. There are quite a few issues in this regard on which we need to focus our attention.

One primary measure is the urgent need to work together to create an international legal regime that encompasses all spheres of human activity and that would not allow, or would leave no room for, anyone to perpetrate acts of terrorism against innocent civilians. The taking of such measures should be the responsibility of all branches of the United Nations system. We could also assess what contribution or specific input, either directly or indirectly, the First Committee could make towards that objective.

The question also arises of whether weapon-based security, which militarily powerful States seem to pursue, could bring security and peace for the inhabitants of those States. It has been assumed by some for a long time that the security of a nation-State could be assured by a weapon-based system of security with an array of weapons of mass destruction and attendant technologically advanced delivery vehicles. Such an impressive arsenal, it was calculated, would deter real and perceived enemies. Yet, even with such overwhelming military power, the ability to ensure physical security for all people in a State apparently remains elusive. Therefore, the quest for more advanced weapon systems does not appear to help much in ensuring human security.

Moreover, the ability of non-State actors to lay their hands not only on small arms and light weapons but also possibly on weapons and means of mass destruction has emerged as a matter of grave concern. In this context we welcome the initiative taken by the Department for Disarmament Affairs to host a special symposium on terrorism and disarmament. We expect that the discussion in this forum will provide new insights into this important issue, and especially on how terrorism would impact on disarmament measures.

Since the establishment of the United Nations 50 years ago, we have debated many theoretical perspectives on how best to achieve international peace and security that will benefit all the peoples of the world. We have discussed a range of theories, including the concept of common security, as well as the implications of the theory of mutually assured destruction, and several others.

The Millennium Declaration adopted at the turn of this century by our heads of States underlined the axiom of peace and security with less armament and more cooperation. The Declaration also reiterated the often repeated desire of humankind for common security based on collective reliance, at both national and international levels. The hope was held out that countries would pause in their desire for increased weaponization and would even roll back ongoing programmes. It was natural for us to expect that such lofty ideals would percolate down towards the various United Nations disarmament and security forums such as this Committee and the Conference on Disarmament, and bodies for treaty review. However, it is apparent that developments since the Millennium Summit have led us in the opposite direction.

International disarmament and arms control treaty systems have been challenged in many ways. Several treaty review mechanisms are becoming theatres for polemics. Treaties currently in force are contested for being outdated on the basis of unproven theories and technological abilities. The spirit and the purpose of some other widely adhered-to treaties are being violated because of a distinct lack of commitment for implementation measures by the parties to the treaties, and ill-motivated actions by those outside. The rule-based international conduct required to be observed under several treaty regimes is therefore being challenged. In this regard it is evident that the post-cold-war search by major Powers on how to achieve strategic balance or national security postures with or without nuclear weapons is not yet settled. That is obviously at the expense of a very large number of bystanders. All these developments do not bode well

for our efforts in this Committee and elsewhere to achieve international peace and security.

The most glaring victim of this retrograde trend is the Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva. That United Nations body, specially constituted for disarmament treaty-making, has tied itself in knots, resulting in a stalemate, primarily as a result of the strategic and tactical postures of some of its members. The Conference, touted as the world's single multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, remains inactive for the fourth year running. Neither the spirit of the Millennium Declaration nor the solemn commitment at the 2000 NPT Review Conference has had any positive effect in triggering meaningful action in the Conference on Disarmament.

Sri Lanka is firmly convinced that the Conference on Disarmament should work towards the goals for which it was originally established. In this spirit, and as a manifestation of our commitment to make that forum useful again, I accepted the responsibility entrusted to me by the members of the Conference on Disarmament to coordinate the efforts of the Conference to find ways and means to ensure its improved and effective functioning. There were several other issues, such as expansion of the membership and agenda of the Conference that were discussed simultaneously.

It was clear that an overwhelming number of the members of the Conference on Disarmament desire — and in fact are even ready — to change its rules of procedure with a view to making it more productive. During our deliberations several innovative ideas were discussed on how the Conference could be productive, pending the commencement of full-fledged negotiations towards specific treaty regimes. My delegation expects this process of consultation to continue at the next session of the Conference on Disarmament so as to arrive at concrete decisions.

The objective of a world without nuclear weapons still remains as distant as ever. It is our earnest desire that this year will be the watershed in our quest for more resolute action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This practically unusable weapon still remains in the armouries of several countries. There is also a likelihood that the number of countries in possession of such weapons will increase if the mystique and power status attached to them is not removed and a clear action programme established to eliminate them.

At the same time, the endeavour of some countries to delink efforts for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons from those of nuclear disarmament is a matter of serious concern. Such an approach is not only preposterous but fraught with danger. The world will never be safe with a regime that would create permanent "haves" and "have nots" in nuclear weaponry. Such an arrangement is inherently unstable and unbalanced. History is full of failures of such projects in all fields of human activity, and in such instances the ultimate levelling-off has created major upheavals. Moreover, the perpetual existence of weapons of mass destruction, and arrangements at apparently managing them safely, are not only untenable and contradictory but could lead to unpredictable, disastrous consequences. In this regard we believe that the Secretary-General's proposal for an international conference on eliminating nuclear dangers is a step in the right direction and should receive greater attention at this juncture.

My country, together with Egypt, has had the honour for many years to bring to the attention of the Committee the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This is a manifestation of our often repeated belief that the last frontier of humankind, outer space, should remain peaceful as our common heritage and that this is vital for preserving stability and security on earth. However, our efforts to obtain consensus and to work towards concrete action on this issue have not yet produced results.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, which was first established by the Conference on Disarmament in 1985 and chaired by Sri Lanka in 1998, has already examined and identified a number of important issues and proposals as well as a few initiatives relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The re-establishment of that Ad Hoc Committee by the Conference on Disarmament has the broad support of its members. However, differences persist regarding the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee. In this context we hope that the resolution on this subject in the First Committee this year will mark further progress towards our ultimate goal, and not a retreat from what has already been achieved.

Despite the progress recently achieved at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, we remain deeply concerned that unless we take further resolute action the problem will remain as acute as ever. We congratulate Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodriguez of

Colombia on his invaluable contribution as the Chairman of the Conference and welcome the consensus Programme of Action that was adopted.

However, it is our view that this modest achievement should not be considered as an end in itself. We expect the United Nations to play a major role in the implementation of the agreed measures and follow-up actions. At the same time, States and regional and international organizations, including the United Nations system, should continue to develop and support action-oriented research on this complex issue with a view to bringing forth other relevant and interconnected issues pertaining to the illicit transfer, manufacture and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially those that relate to non-State actors. Such efforts should focus on issues that were not adequately addressed during the preparatory process leading up to the Conference. In particular, brokering, tracing, and modes of conveyance should not be treated merely as law-and-order issues.

In this regard, Sri Lanka welcomes the proposal made by the Rio Group of countries to hold a debate on the prohibition of the sale of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. Moreover, in our view, the question of the supply of ammunition and explosives is an important related issue and should not be put on the back burner. After all, without ammunition a small arm becomes a primitive weapon, a stick.

The difficulty and complexity of addressing some of these issues need not be an obstacle. Even at this hour more and more civilians are being killed indiscriminately by armed combatants and terrorists using small arms and explosives. In fact, if we are unable to monitor and control the production and transfer of sophisticated explosives, a vehicle such as a ship or an airplane could easily be converted into a weapon of mass destruction, with enough explosives packed into it.

We deeply regret that the initiative aimed at establishing a protocol for verification and compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has ended in Geneva without final agreement. The credibility of international instruments such as the BWC, prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of their verification regimes. The establishment of such verification regimes can be accomplished only through open and transparent multilateral negotiations.

A more disturbing factor is that for the foreseeable future the BWC is likely to remain the only treaty dealing with a weapon of mass destruction that has no verification mechanism. The implications of this situation would certainly have adverse effects on the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly at a time when the international community is preparing to deal with the menace of terrorism. The growing threat of terrorism and the capacity of terrorists to use means of mass destruction such as biological and toxin weapons should not be overlooked or underestimated.

It is apparent that international security perceptions and paradigms are in a state of flux at this moment. The promise of a peace dividend at the end of the cold war and at the onset of the twenty-first century has not been realized. In this context, we wish to emphasize the value of rule-based conduct for States and for their peoples. The evolution of strategic perceptions and the advent of new security paradigms should not undermine the existing sense of worldwide stability and security. New strategic visions and challenges, as well as threat perceptions, are best addressed in a multilateral context. Unilateralism should be avoided at all costs.

Acts of terrorism that have caused unprecedented havoc in many parts of the world generate the need for a global compact on human security that will benefit both Member States of the United Nations and the peoples of the world. It is apparent that the security of a State does not necessarily translate into the security and well-being of a global citizen in a globalizing world. Only a rule-based system that is as robust and globally respected as that now operating in several other fields of human endeavour will have the capacity to assure international peace and security. We need to formulate and agree upon a rule-based system of security and conduct that will be respected by States, civil society and the global citizen. In this context my delegation expects that the First Committee deliberations will be a fruitful exercise and will engender a set of resolutions that will lend us strength to implement an effective programme of work in other security and disarmament forums, beneficial for all countries and all peoples.

Mr. Castellón Duarte (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I wish to express my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First

Committee of the General Assembly for the present session. I am sure that thanks to your experience in the area of disarmament and your well-known diplomatic skills you will guide our work with great efficiency. We pledge the support of our delegation in your task.

First, I wish to align myself with the statement made by the delegation of Chile on Monday, 8 October, on behalf of the Rio Group.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September compel us to develop and implement new concepts that will guarantee national and international security. These cruel and violent terrorist acts make it necessary to increase our efforts for the control of armaments, for disarmament and for non-proliferation. These vile and perfidious acts have given rise to a coalition to fight terrorism, which constitutes a threat to global order and social coexistence. We reiterate our solidarity with the people and the Government of the United States of America.

My delegation expresses its consternation over the continuation of the large-scale illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the various regions of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean. Small arms and light weapons have a set of characteristics that make them the weapons of choice in internal conflicts and in actions carried out by terrorist groups, insurgent forces, drug traffickers and irregular troops. Their main victims are invariably defenceless civilians.

The Conference that was held in July this year is a major first step in the effective fight against this scourge that knows no geographic borders and that each year violates the human rights of millions of persons. The Programme of Action to prevent, fight and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects has a reasonable and broad approach to addressing the various problems associated with the diverse aspects of this trade at national, regional and global levels. Nevertheless, in the future we must make progress, especially regarding objectives that could not be adopted at the Conference, such as the control and sale of these weapons to non-State entities.

The Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, was unable for the fourth consecutive year to agree on an agenda, which made it impossible to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty for military purposes. We deem it necessary for the member States of that forum to act in good faith to eliminate the obstacles that stand in the way of its normal operation and, thus, progress in its work.

We agree, and much more so after the events of 11 September last, that nuclear weapons are a permanent danger since there is a possibility that they could be used. The consequences of a nuclear attack can never be contained within the borders of a country or within the territories of the belligerent parties. Countries possessing nuclear weapons have a very important responsibility because of the damage that would be caused to innocent populations, especially in the case of an accident or, through neglect, their use by terrorists. Those countries must do everything in their power to prevent these dangers from becoming a reality.

The conclusions of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) reaffirm the conviction that the full and effective implementation of the Treaty and the non-proliferation regime in all its aspects has a vital role to play in the promotion of international peace and security. Strict compliance with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is vital for the maintenance of global security and constitutes the unequivocal path towards the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. The 13 measures adopted last year by the States parties to the NPT must be implemented as soon as possible, especially by the nuclear Powers.

My Government is firmly convinced that the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, dated 8 July 1996, continues to be of great importance in the area of nuclear disarmament. It clearly establishes that States have the legal obligation to carry out negotiations in good faith leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects and to conclude them as soon as possible.

The delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a source of concern to us, and we urge States that have not signed or ratified it to do so as soon as possible. One opportunity could be the forthcoming second Conference on the entry into force of the Treaty. According to the record, 13 ratifications are still necessary for it to enter into force, two of them by States that possess nuclear weapons.

As a State party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), we support the

creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all geographic regions, since these constitute one of the most important advances made by the international community to promote confidence and a safer and more stable world. However, we must move even further along the road to disarmament since, as stated in the above-mentioned Treaty, although militarily non-nuclear areas make a decisive contribution to international peace and security, they are not an end in themselves but a means to achieve general and complete disarmament in a subsequent stage.

The demining work in Nicaragua has made great progress in recent years thanks to a programme carried out by the Nicaraguan army with the support of the Organization of American States (OAS) and of the Governments of various friendly States that have cooperated by providing technical personnel and financing. These include the United States, Norway, Argentina, Denmark, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Spain, Brazil, El Salvador and Guatemala.

At the end of the civil war of the 1980s more than 135,000 of these devices remained in Nicaraguan soil. About half of these mines have been destroyed by the army, which has demined more than 2 million square metres of the national territory. The southern border of the country has been declared free of anti-personnel landmines. According to Red Cross data, buried mines cause about 50 accidents each year; 90 per cent of the victims are civilian, and of these 65 per cent are children and adolescents. Other sources indicate that more than 200 people have died in accidents caused by anti-personnel landmines, and the OAS states that more than 800 persons — women, men and children — have been incapacitated by explosions of mines and other explosive devices.

About 130,000 mines remained in the warehouses of the army after the conflict. About 70,000 of these devices were destroyed before September this year. On the occasion of the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in Managua, another 20,000 were destroyed. We hope that by 2004 the last mine will have been eliminated from Nicaraguan soil. On the other hand, we must mention that the demining commission in Nicaragua has emphasized the rehabilitation and social reintegration of the victims of mines, as well as the work of prevention and awareness in this regard. We know that a million mines are planted in 11 countries of Latin America, 110 million throughout the world, and their unexpected explosions kill or maim about 70 persons each day.

The Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention was held in Managua from 18 to 21 September in a world shaken by the barbaric terrorist attacks in the United States. Because of the attacks my Government could have chosen to change the dates of this Conference but, as announced by the Foreign Minister of my country at the inauguration of the Conference, that was not done for two basic reasons: first, because the meeting was of great importance for global peace and for the millions of citizens who live in countries where the scourge of anti-personnel mines represents a threat for old people, persons in the prime of life, and children; and, secondly, because we did not want to give in to terrorism. We did not want ourselves to be cornered by these sinister and cowardly forces which seek to interrupt normalcy, paralyse us, and turn us into hostages of fear, all in the name of causes that are presented as noble objectives. By coming to Nicaragua, the delegates of more than 90 States gave a vote of confidence to peace, to the peaceful solution of conflicts and to civilization, and a resounding "no" to hatred, the law of the jungle and senseless and cowardly violence.

The Declaration of Managua reaffirms among other aspects the unfailing commitment of the States parties to the Convention to the total eradication of anti-personnel mines and to deal with their treacherous and inhuman effects. It also calls on all States that continue to use, produce or acquire anti-personnel mines, to stop these activities at once. Those States that have stated their commitment to the purposes of the Convention must recognize that continued use of such mines was a clear violation of their commitment. We also welcomed the broad support achieved by the Convention through more than 120 ratifications and 21 signatures, including more than 40 States affected by mines. It was recognized that the new international standards established by the Convention were a milestone in its implementation, including the conduct of many States not parties to the Convention but which respect its provisions.

Today, together with the delegations of Belgium and Norway, we will circulate a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction" and we ask interested delegations, especially those from any State

that is a party to the Convention, to co-sponsor it. We will soon present the draft to the Secretariat.

Mr. Draganov (Bulgaria): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that the diplomatic skills and the knowledge of disarmament issues you and the Bureau bring to the deliberations of the First Committee will facilitate the successful completion of our endeavours. Let me assure you, Sir, of my delegation's support and cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

One issue has dominated the world's attention over the past few weeks. We are still trying to come to terms with the horrible terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September. A tragedy of this scale does blow away a lot of illusions. A new look at hard realities is required and we are all being put to the test of where we stand and what we stand for. Clearly, new approaches to security, strengthening the non-proliferation and disarmament regimes and broad international cooperation are becoming even more essential in reducing the threats posed to mankind today. As demonstrated by the 11 September attacks, the unacceptable menace posed by terrorism requires from the international community an even more vigorous response and complex safeguards, particularly against any possible access by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction. Terrorism today is directed against the very foundations of human civilization and it is up to the whole of humanity to defend its values. We believe this Committee is highly relevant to the efforts to make our world a safer place.

The Bulgarian Government and Parliament expressed its sympathy and solidarity with all the victims and their relatives from more than 80 countries and offered the United States Government its unequivocal support in undertaking the long struggle to fight terrorism. Bulgaria is proud to be an active member of the international coalition against terrorism. On behalf of my delegation I express to the members of the United States delegation our admiration for the courage and strength displayed by the American people in these trying times.

At the beginning of the week, the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Jean Lint, delivered a statement on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries, and Norway. Ambassador Lint addressed the problems of international security and disarmament in a comprehensive way. Bulgaria has already aligned itself with that statement so I will only highlight some issues of particular importance for my delegation.

As a candidate for NATO and European Union membership and an active member of the United Nations, Bulgaria has endeavoured to introduce top, international-standard export controls on foreign trade in arms and dual-use goods and technologies. A consistent and responsible policy in export controls remains a high priority task for my Government; it is an essential element of our strategy for accession to NATO and the European Union, and an effective contribution to the global fight to counter international terrorism. Last April the Bulgarian Government decreed a consolidated list of countries and organizations to which the Republic of Bulgaria applies prohibitions or restrictions on the sale and supply of arms and related equipment. The list is in full compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions and the relevant European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) decisions. The control lists applied by Bulgaria effectively implement the unified and annually updated European Union lists for dual-use goods and technologies, the Wassenaar Arrangement munitions list in the field of the arms trade, as well as the lists of other multilateral and regional arrangements for non-proliferation.

Recently, Bulgaria was officially admitted as a full member to the Australia Group. We value that membership as recognition of the non-proliferation policies pursued by Bulgaria and the efficient export control systems in place. Let me mention that while not yet a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), my country unilaterally controls all the items placed on the equipment and technology control list of the MTCR. Bulgaria has declared its interest in becoming a member of the MTCR as well.

The excessive and destabilizing accumulation of, and illicit trafficking in, small arms and light weapons help to aggravate ethnic and political violence, exacerbate human casualties and suffering, undermine post-conflict rehabilitation, and feed terrorism and organized crime. As an active Member of the United Nations Bulgaria adheres to the efforts of the international community to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In fulfilment of our international commitments

and the programme for restructuring the Bulgarian Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defence is carrying out projects for the destruction of existing small arms and light weapons surpluses. We are in close cooperation with a number of partners such as the United States of America, Canada, Great Britain, Norway, the Netherlands and others on a whole range of issues related to stockpile management and destruction of small arms and light weapons. In accordance with the Programme of Action adopted in July by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, more than 75,000 small arms are now being destroyed. Bulgaria is also an initiator of many subregional and regional efforts regarding small arms and light weapons in the framework of various forums and organizations, such as the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, the European Union, the OSCE, the NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council working group on small arms and light weapons.

The issue of eliminating the mine threat in our region has always been a high priority for my country. In October 1998, Bulgaria proposed to the South-East European States a political commitment not to use anti-personnel mines and not to deploy them in areas adjacent to their common borders. Bulgaria ratified amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) on 4 November 1998, thus contributing to the timely entry into force of this important international instrument. All obligations arising from that document have been strictly implemented ever since. An important milestone on the way to turning the region into an anti-personnel-mine-free zone was the Agreement between Bulgaria and Turkey, signed in March 1999, on the non-use of anti-personnel mines and their removal from or destruction in the areas adjacent to the common border. A new step in this direction was the recent decision by the Turkish and Greek Governments to conclude a similar agreement, and simultaneously to adhere to the mine-ban Treaty.

By the end of December 2000, Bulgaria had demined all its minefields, destroyed its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and became 100 per cent free of anti-personnel mines. Bulgaria reiterates its readiness to provide expertise and to participate actively in the destruction of anti-personnel mines globally. The Bulgarian specialized agencies have the capacity, as well as their own technology, to participate in such operations. We believe that the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe has the potential to pave the way for the establishment of an anti-personnel-mine-free zone in the region. Bulgaria will continue to work towards that goal.

In view of the forthcoming Second Review Conference of the CCW, Bulgaria supports the efforts of the President-designate to coordinate work on the different proposals for further strengthening the CCW. We fully share all constructive contributions aimed at increasing the humanitarian effect of the Convention.

In conclusion, allow me to express the hope of my delegation that the sense of unity and partnership shown by the international community in forming the new global coalition against terrorism will also serve as a guiding example and a source of inspiration in our debate on disarmament and international security.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.